

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1722

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN) at 5 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.

EARTH DAY

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1117) declaring the support of the House of Representatives for the goals and ideals of Earth Day and for developing the scientific and technological capabilities to achieve those goals.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1117

Whereas the need to educate Americans on the importance of stewardship of the environment led to the first Earth Day in 1970, the passage of a variety of environmental laws, and substantial environmental improvements over the intervening years;

Whereas substantial air quality and other environmental problems persist in many areas of our country;

Whereas today increasing numbers of Americans are concerned with the relatively rapid changes in our environment and decreasing biodiversity;

Whereas the need to improve our interaction with the environment has led to the need for more sophisticated environmental research and development of solutions to environmental problems;

Whereas today the importance of scientific evidence in making correct decisions about environmental problems has never been more important;

Whereas Earth Day activities increase our understanding of the environment and its relationship to our personal decisions regarding energy conservation, use of renewable energy, use of natural resources, and recycling; and

Whereas Earth Day has become the pre-eminent day of environmental celebrations, clean-ups, and educational events across the country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Earth Day and thanks the many organizers and participants across the country for their tireless efforts in support of the environment;

(2) encourages the Department of Energy to step up its efforts in research, development, and demonstration of renewable energy technology and energy conservation techniques; and

(3) encourages all segments of American society to work together in ensuring that the research and development necessary to uncover solutions to our major environmental problems occurs in a timely manner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. MCNERNEY) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on H.R. 1117, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, all over the world, concerned citizens are coming together to celebrate the 38th annual anniversary of Earth Day. Since its inception in 1970, Earth Day has become an international call to action on behalf of the environment, and I am proud to offer this resolution in support of the goals and ideals of Earth Day.

We are constantly reminded of the serious environmental challenges that our country and our world are facing. The greatest challenge, global warming, continues to grab headlines, as it should. We are already feeling the effects of a heating planet, and it is long past time for our country to get serious about climate change.

Global warming is a serious threat, but also presents an opportunity and strong motivation to develop the clean energy economy of the future. I spent much of my career before entering Congress as a renewable energy engineer, and I have seen firsthand the development and evolution of the clean technologies that combat climate change. We have much of the scientific knowledge and technical capability to attack climate change head on, but there is still more progress to be made.

Today, Earth Day is an important opportunity to rededicate ourselves, both as individuals and as a Nation, to making the best use of the resources available to us. I want to commend the scientists, engineers, businesspeople, and educators who are working to develop the clean economy of the future, as well as the millions of Americans who are taking action to live greener lifestyles. I believe today is an important opportunity to honor the contributions toward a healthy planet.

Earth Day is also an important opportunity to look forward to a greener tomorrow. We should renew our efforts to push ahead with research and development of the cutting edge, environmentally friendly technologies of the future, as well as the many smart policies that will preserve our environment. Confronting great environmental challenges will require technological innovation, as well as a forward-thinking public policy. I believe we are up to the task.

As important as combating climate change is, Earth Day also reminds us of

the other crucial environmental issues of our time. We need to preserve our precious natural resources, and to do that, we have to maintain our national lands, protect biodiversity, ensure clean air for everybody, and make smart investments in environmental cleanup efforts. These are important legislative opportunities before us, and I hope that we will embrace the chance to preserve our treasured landscapes. I am optimistic about our environmental future. Looking forward, I see an America that runs on clean sources of energy and supports a wide spectrum of family wage green energy jobs. I see an America where environmentally sustainable building practices are the norm, not the exception. And I see an America where our most beautiful landscapes are protected for our children and grandchildren.

I commend the organizers of Earth Day and the millions of people around the globe who are participating in Earth Day events today. Your dedication is admirable, and I am confident that environmental awareness and activism will continue to flourish. I am also inspired by the grassroots commitment to environmental protection that Earth Day embodies, and I look forward to celebrating many more Earth Days in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the goals and ideals of Earth Day.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. I rise in support of this resolution commemorating Earth Day and its goals and ideals. The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970 by 20 million people. That same year, President Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public health and the environment and Congress amended the Clean Air Act with the goals of improving the national air quality, reduce auto emissions, and create anti-pollution standards.

We have come a long way as a Nation since that first Earth Day. In 1972, when Congress passed the Clean Air Act, only 26 percent of the Nation's streams were safe for swimming and fishing. Today, about 60 percent of our streams are safe for such purposes. This day has a very special meaning for me because of my childhood experiences with streams. In the early thirties, I grew up in the coal mining country of western Pennsylvania, and every one of the streams that I could get to was called a sulfur creek because it contained waters that had leached the sulfur out of the mines. There was only one thing that lived in those creeks, and that was a little red wiggly worm. It must have been tough because nothing else lived there. The rocks were all covered by a slimy, orangish kind of a film. I am sure those streams weren't safe to swim in, but we swam in them anyway because we were too poor to go to the pool. I didn't know where a pool existed. So Earth Day has a very special meaning for me. Those streams